

## **Cornwall Councillors' Report for Saltash Town Council December 2020**

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In addition to the regular meetings we attend as councillors, dealing with topics as varied as Planning, the Tamar Bridge, Pensions and Anti-Social Behaviour issues, November also saw two meetings of Full Council, discussions around Cornwall Council's budget, meetings for the recruitment of a new Chief Fire Officer and meetings to support our community through the second lockdown. It was a particularly busy month for the Cornwall Councillors representing Saltash.

### **1. Tier One, Tracking Ambassadors and Vaccine Rollout**

There are 157 Upper Tier Local Authorities across England. Of those, Cornwall and has one of the lowest cumulative case rates of Covid-19, but the number of new cases in November was very much higher than in October or September. In the week ending 21st November Cornwall's 7-day case rate was 90 per 100,000, which would have put us in the highest COVID-19 tier of restrictions back in the summer.

Week leading to 24th Nov: 224 new cases (220 deaths in total)  
Week leading to 17th Nov: 350 new cases (214 deaths in total)  
Week leading to 11th Nov: 221 new cases (213 deaths in total)  
Week leading to 3rd Nov: 175 new cases (213 deaths in total)  
Week leading to 27th Oct: 175 new cases  
Week leading to 20th Oct: 81 new cases  
Week leading to 13th Oct: 91 new cases  
Week leading to 6th Oct: 78 new cases  
Week leading to 23rd Sept: 83 new cases  
Week leading to 16th Sept: 33 new cases  
Week leading to 8th Sept: 12 new cases  
Week leading to 2nd Sept: 5 new cases

The tiers are reviewed every two weeks, and Cornwall is close to being moved in to Tier Two. We all need to remain vigilant if we want to save lives, save businesses and remain in Tier One.

- COVID-19 cases doubled every fortnight in the months leading up to mid-November, with some outbreaks in areas such as Liskeard and Torpoint, where case rates were as high as in the north west of the UK
- There has been a clear increase in cases in Plymouth and South East Cornwall, with more people in hospital and more in intensive care in Derriford
- The number of people in hospital in Plymouth and Exeter with COVID-19 is nearly at the same level as at the peak of the first wave, and is expected to keep rising for the next few weeks

As Tier One, Cornwall is rated as Medium Alert, which means that our pubs and restaurants can stay open but must close by 11pm; indoor leisure facilities can remain open; and we can meet with a maximum of six people, indoors or outdoors.

Cornwall Council's tracking team is continuing its excellent work bolstering the national effort in tackling the spread of COVID-19, with other local authorities looking to follow Cornwall's track and trace model. The tracking team comes from a range of backgrounds including public health, environmental health and nursing staff. They work on a rota basis with five people each day on weekdays, and one person making calls on the weekends.

The team aims to:

- Contact all cases to establish if they have any health and wellbeing needs, such as the need for food or medicine whilst self-isolating
- Ensure that the cases understand the requirements of self-isolation
- Ensure that all the cases' close contacts have been identified and recorded on the national system (CTAS)
- Determine, where possible any possible routes of transmission of the virus to the person, we do this by asking about household/friendship cases and understanding work settings, or previous activities
- Identify any settings/communities where there is obvious transmission that has not been alerted to Public Health England and the national system

This work helps the team understand the bigger picture of data in Cornwall and act quickly if areas of concern are identified.

Cornwall Council and the Cornwall Fire and Rescue Service are using surge funding made available by central Government to introduce an initiative that will see 'Covid Ambassadors' have a visible presence in many towns across Cornwall, including Saltash. Starting on 2nd December 2020 and concluding on 8th January 2021, the Ambassadors will make daytime and evening patrols, supporting shops and licensed premises, assisting the public and businesses to comply with Covid regulations, and helping keep our communities safe.

We have received a joint letter, signed by many leaders of the NHS in Cornwall as well as Cornwall Council's Director of Public Health and other professionals, outlining the worst-case scenarios and stressing how important it is not to become complacent. They remind us that the virus is still evident in our communities and suggest practical things to do keep people safe:

For yourself

- Only meet other people in line with government restrictions. While we are in Tier 1, this means meeting no more than six people indoors or outdoors
- Always wash your hands, wear a mask, keep your distance. Hands, Face, Space
- If you are eligible and haven't already had one, have the flu vaccination because this will help your immunity and protect others.  
[www.nhs.uk/conditions/flu](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/flu)
- If a routine treatment has been postponed please do attend the re-scheduled date when you are given it

For your loved ones:

- Support anyone vulnerable with shopping or simple care needs
- Follow the government guidelines when you are together
- If you have symptoms, try to isolate from the rest of your household to avoid spreading it further. Clean any shared spaces often; don't share crockery and try to isolate in a separate room if you can

For your community:

- Consider helping others in your street or town who are elderly or vulnerable by signing up as a volunteer. Contact 01872 266988 or [www.volunteercornwall.org.uk/coronavirusvolunteer](http://www.volunteercornwall.org.uk/coronavirusvolunteer)

For the NHS:

- Help the NHS and care services by supporting anyone who could be discharged from hospital by providing simple care needs while they get back on their feet
- Choose well –unless you need emergency care, contact your GP or 111 in the first instance <https://www.kernowccg.nhs.uk/get-info/choose-well/>

Cornwall Council is working closely with the NHS, the Police and other agencies to get everything ready for the mass vaccination programme that will be led by the NHS. Cornwall Council is due to be receiving a briefing from the NHS next week, after which we will be in a position to give more clarity about the details for Cornwall. The priority for roll out in the first instance is likely to be health and social care staff.

If you have experience vaccinating or think you could support the vaccination programme please visit: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/join-the-nhs-covid-19-vaccine-team/>

## **Tamar Bridge**

At the end of November, central government announced they would be providing £1,643,106 to the Bridge and Ferry Crossings to cover the lost toll income over the period from April to July 2020. This is 71.25% of the overall lost income during this time, and includes the period of toll suspension during the first lockdown. This is the first tranche of payments as part of central government's "Local Government Income Compensation Scheme for Lost Sales, Fees and Charges", and it is anticipated that the Bridge and Ferry Crossings will receive further tranches from the same scheme until March 2021.

With this funding there is no longer a need for an immediate toll increase. However, the consultation that took place in anticipation of a toll increase indicated that 24% of users think that the pandemic will cause their travel patterns to permanently change, and current forecasts are predicting that traffic volumes will return to 90% of pre-Covid levels. At its next meeting on 18th December, the committee will therefore be discussing finances and next steps, including the offer from the Maritime Minister to support discussions with Highways England concerning contributions to Bridge maintenance.

## **2. Education, Free School Meal vouchers and Healthy Start vouchers**

Cornwall Council's Education and Public Health teams are working hard to support schools to minimise the risks of Covid-19, supporting bubble closures and ensuring as many children as possible are able to stay in their education setting.

Approximately 0.36% of the school population in Cornwall has tested positive for Covid19, but the knock-on impact of staff shortages has led to a number of school closures.

In November, Cornwall Council allocated £399,000 of funding received from central government under the 'Covid Winter Grant Scheme' directly to schools in the form of vouchers or gift cards that can be used by families in shops or supermarkets local to the schools. By acting early, schools have the time needed to be able to distribute vouchers before the end of term, and the 13,300 children in Cornwall entitled to benefit-related free school meals will each receive a voucher for £15 a week over the two-week holiday.

Parents who think their child may have become eligible for Free School Meals in recent months can apply via a simple, confidential process on Cornwall Council's website: [www.cornwall.gov.uk/schoolmeals](http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/schoolmeals)

Pregnant women, women with a baby under the age of one and children aged up to their fourth birthday are also eligible to receive Healthy Start vitamins as well as vouchers for fresh fruit and vegetables. Only around 50% of the eligible people in Cornwall are currently accessing the Healthy Start vouchers and only 2% are accessing the vitamins, so please do encourage people to take advantage of this scheme. For more details, visit: <https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/for-health-professionals/healthy-start-resources/>

## **3. Winter Wellbeing**

This is the seventh year of the Winter Wellness project, a programme where over 30 partners including Cornwall Council, NHS Kernow, Citizens Advice Cornwall and the Cornwall Community Foundation work together to deliver common outcomes of reducing fuel poverty, improving health and improving progress to work.

The Winter Wellbeing programme offers access to a range of services to help people stay warm and well over the winter period, including:

- Independent energy advice tailored to individual needs
- Access to heating and insulation grants
- Practical advice on:
  - understanding and reducing energy bills
  - combatting condensation and damp
- Support for families with children who have additional needs
- Debt advice
- Benefits advice
- Health information

The work of the Winter Wellbeing partnership last year alone saved the NHS over £43,000 in avoidable hospital admissions, but over the years Winter Wellness has:

- helped prevent 848 hospital admissions
- Enabled 1,630 households to access the Winter Wellness Emergency Fund for electric, gas, heating oil, logs and coal to stay warm
- Enabled 348 households to remain in work or progress towards work
- Enabled 200 households to access the Warm Home Discount
- Enabled 413 households to receive £256,887 of extra income through Discretionary Housing Payments
- Installed first time central heating in over 1,000 homes

Of particular interest this year:

- A new fund called Warm and Well Cornwall, which is available for people who need help to heat their homes
- The Cold Weather Priority Service, which is designed to ensure that fuel is available to customers who are most vulnerable to cold conditions
- The Choose Well Campaign, which helps people get the right healthcare service, in the right place, at the right time, helping to keep the Emergency Department available for those who are in urgent need
- The Warm Homes Fund, which has helped install first time central heating

Ring Freephone 0800 954 1956 for advice, or download the Winter Wellbeing Guide (full of contact details) from : [https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/media/45137688/winter-wellbeing-2020-21\\_web-final.pdf](https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/media/45137688/winter-wellbeing-2020-21_web-final.pdf)

#### **4. Gyllyn Warbarth, Together We Can – a new Vision for Cornwall**

A plan that sets out a Vision for Cornwall in 2050 was approved at the meeting of Full Council held on 25th November. It was developed following a listening exercise, The Cornwall We Want, that saw thousands of people get involved and have their say.

Over 25,000 people visited The Cornwall We Want online platform, and over 4000 people contributed by taking surveys, participating in live events and focus groups or sending in written contributions.

The Vision commits to creating a cleaner, greener, fairer and more inclusive Cornwall, with key goals including becoming plastic-free and carbon-neutral, ending street homelessness and securing a real living wage for every job.

Gyllyn Warbarth has already been endorsed by the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Health and Care Partnership Senate, the Cornwall Association of Local Councils, the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Nature Partnership and Cornwall's Youth MPs. The Youth MPs commented: "This Vision places the most pressing concerns for children right at the heart of plans for Cornwall's future, from protecting the environment through to improving mental health, ending child poverty and giving everyone an equal chance of a good life".

Here is a link to Gyllyn Warbarth: [https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/media/45178306/the-cornwall-plan\\_-251120.pdf](https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/media/45178306/the-cornwall-plan_-251120.pdf)

## 5. Business Support

Currently, there are 21,000 people on furlough in Cornwall, and Covid-19 is wreaking a devastating impact on many businesses. Please signpost employers or employees with concerns to the Growth and Skills Hub or the People Hub.



Tell businesses to contact us!

Phone 01209 708660  
Webchat [www.ciosgrowthhub.com](http://www.ciosgrowthhub.com)  
Email [hello@ciosgrowthhub.com](mailto:hello@ciosgrowthhub.com)  
Twitter @growthskillshub  
Facebook [facebook.com/growthskillshub](https://facebook.com/growthskillshub)

Let's talk!

HM Government  
CORNWALL COUNCIL  
CORNWALL & ISLES OF SCILLY  
European Union  
European Structural and Investment Funds

The Growth and Skills Hub was launched in 2016, and is the gateway to business support, skills and training opportunities.

The People Hub is a new triage and referral service that acts as a single point of contact for unemployed and economically inactive people in Cornwall giving practical support, advice and information such as skills, employment, education and finance.



Information Classification: PUBLIC

Introducing:

# The People Hub

Free signposting support for individuals not in work

We'll connect you to the right service for you

Friendly, localised support with advice on key issues:

- ✓ money worries
- ✓ looking for work
- ✓ developing your skills
- ✓ retraining
- ✓ helping you into or towards employment

[ciosgrowthhub.com/peoplehub](http://ciosgrowthhub.com/peoplehub)

0333 0150699

European Union  
European Social Fund

More information at: <https://www.cornwallislesofscillygrowthprogramme.org.uk/>

Cornwall Council is also running a series of webinars every Thursday in December and January (but not Christmas Eve) around guidance about how to trade safely and in compliance with the latest Covid rules and regulations. Each webinar will involve a presentation of a 15 – 20 minutes bringing you up to date with the latest changes and key issues followed by the weekly topic update. If you can't make the webinar live a recording will be available afterwards and questions can be sent in advance. <https://www.businessregulatorysupport.co.uk/our-services/business-recovery/webinars/>

## **6. Gender-based violence - Ring Safer Futures on 0300 777 4777**

In the last 12 months a staggering 4,695 people accessed domestic abuse services in Cornwall.

At the end of November, Cornwall Council's Safer Cornwall team and Together for Families Directorate joined forces with the police, the NHS, the Voluntary Sector, Probation Services and Cornwall Fire and Rescue Service to launch 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence. The aims are to highlight the issue in Cornwall, to try and remove the stigma and to encourage people to speak out and access the help they need.

Domestic abuse can take many forms and often those who are being hurt don't see themselves as experiencing abuse. In Cornwall young women aged between 18 and 25 are most at risk of direct victimisation of domestic abuse and sexual violence. It can have devastating, long lasting and sometimes tragic consequences.

Cornwall's integrated domestic abuse and sexual violence service, Safer Futures, is providing support, safety planning and information for adults, young people and children, via their helpline, text service, face to face and online. It's important to remember that even in lockdown people at risk can still leave their home to access safety and support.

Access support by calling Safer Futures on **0300 777 4777** or visiting the website at: <https://saferfutures.org.uk/>

If anyone feels unsafe or feels that they are in immediate danger, they should still contact the emergency services via 999. Devon and Cornwall Police work very closely with local domestic abuse and sexual violence services and will ensure that follow-on support is provided.

**Councillor Hilary Frank**

**Councillor Derek Holley**

**Councillor Sheila Lennox-Boyd**

**Councillor Sam Tamlin**